

Chairman Pease!

Senators!

SENATE HIGHWAYS

EXHIBIT NO. 1

DATE 1-18-07

BILL NO. SB-190

I am Mary Ann Fiehrer, chairperson of the Transportation Preservation Society of Montana, a grass roots group that was formed in 2005. Our objectives are to do all we can to prevent any more loss of RR lines in Montana.

We feel this bill allows for a WIN/WIN situation. It keeps open the potential for reactivating the RR in the Missouri River/ I-5 corridor, with its greater economic benefits AND lets people have the bike path so many covet, with ITS economic attributes. It also allows the Helena-Great Falls community (the state and the nation) to experience safe cycling in this superb recreational corridor SOONER THAN LATER!

We feel that a trail adjacent to the Road is an advantage for a GREAT number of reasons:

- 1—It will use existing roads, so another PEOPLE trail is not being added to this already highly used area.
- 2—It will be less costly to add to an existing road rather than creating a “rails-to-trails” situation.
- 3—The backcountry will not be INVADED and thus animals and their habitat will remain undisturbed.
- 4—It will be less costly and more accessible to maintain and repair.
- 5—It will be less costly and more accessible to patrol for litter, weed control and trespassing.
- 6—It will possess better and easier on/off access for users ANYWHERE along the trail.
- 7—The parking and restrooms already in place.
- 8—It will allow for faster and easier access in the case of an emergency along the trail.
- 9—A MUCH, MUCH less chance of trespassing will exist than a trail through the backcountry where curiosity seekers would not be so visible.
- 10—There will be much less chance of encounters with hunters of deer, antelope, elk and fowl.
- 11--There will be no need to fence range/ranch land.
- 12—The trail will follow the IDENTICAL corridor of the proposed Corridor of Discovery bike path, with the same awesome views, etc.
- 13—It could be built in a series of sections and each phase would be immediately useable from anyplace along the route
- 14--We will not be building recreational hopes on the loss of RR: which I feel is building lesser economic hopes, that primarily affect Helena and Great Falls, on greater economic loss, that affects the entire state.

15--Folks, now traveling to Idaho to bike that trail, will stay home to bike and we would regain the money they have been spending out of state (OUR trail would be longer and more diverse)

16--The State Chamber of Commerce and local Chambers could pick up intrastate and interstate advertising the trail as a "DESTINATION".

17--Also, as we work to keep the track in place, we might get a dinner train or some of the other amenities that tourists of all ages and abilities could enjoy and that very many people have expressed an interest in.

18--By leaving the rail line in place, we also have a greater chance of freight traffic resuming and adding to the economy of the entire state: Canada is especially interested in shipping on the Great Falls to Helena line as it is one of the few north/south lines.

19--The trail could be financially funded/maintained by the state (a great investment for some of our surplus budget) and through grants, private donations, the Department of Transportation, Fish, Wild Life, and Parks, etc, which will prevent it from going the way as "OPEN SPACE" and requiring adding tax programs to continue its existence. Some rails-to-trails situations, that I am aware of, have had to revert to new taxation policies imposed by their counties/cities to maintain and repair them

20-- In the Recreation Road area, we envision widening the road and adding a 2-way bike path on one side of the road like in this picture of a trail. If it was felt that the trail should cross the Recreation/Frontage Road at some point, that could occur at a specially marked intersection, as in this picture.

21--The bike path would need to be separated from the Road by a grass buffer, or a curb like set-up, or guard rail, or the cement dividers that separate the directions on I-5

22--We do not want a bike path on either side of the road. That could lead riders to crossing traffic to stop along the river (that might lead to the kind of accident situation that claimed the life of Joe Luckman of Cascade in 1998).

23--The bridges that cross the Missouri River at Wolf Creek and Hardy, would need to be outfitted with cant levers for the cyclists.

23--The road would need to be marked as "SHARED" and the speed limit reduced.

AGAIN I URGE YOU ALL TO VOTE FOR SENATE BILL#190

Here are the pictures I mentioned, my points and a flyer that also reiterates many of the points I made.

*Thank you, Mary Ann R. Frederer*